

Better in Brentwood

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The City of Brentwood has a shining new lease on the future. City planning moved into high gear in April 2014 when Gus Vina became our new City Manager.

Almost from the beginning Gus infused the city with new energy and purpose by planning for improvement in many areas. One of the things Gus embraced was a shop local campaign designed to encourage Brentwood residents to spend their money on local products and services to the extent possible. I had done a lot of preliminary planning for the project. We hired Guerra Graphics to help with logo designs. When Michelle Guerra brought in some designs, I saw something wonderful in her creative drive and presentation style. She seemed a great resource for the campaign. For one thing, while working on the logo, Michelle had come up with the Better In Brentwood tagline, which in three words perfectly captured the purpose we had for the program.

The incomplete project was left to wither on the vine for a couple years until it came to Gus' attention when he called for each of the six departments in the city to present their suggested contribution to a Two Year Strategic Initiative Plan that he was putting together. Each

presentation was to constitute the particular roadmap for where that department was heading. Economic Development's marketing initiatives had landed in my lap, so in preparation for our Strategic Initiative presentation, I pulled Michelle Guerra back in and hired her to come up with a new logo. She came back with several iterations and we landed on a "Shop, Dine, Explore, Live, Play" concept that would guide our subsequent marketing designs. Gus enthusiastically embraced the design and gave me a green light to run with it.

Michelle and I have a wonderful symbiosis. I will lie awake at night thinking of an idea, bring it to Michelle in the morning, who will respond with a suggestion. We often toss the idea back and forth, expanding and developing it.

The marketing campaign has multiple components. Each one is geared to entice visitors, promote tourism, educate residents, and encourage them to adopt a shop, dine, explore, live, and play lifestyle. Some elements will remain as part of the ongoing city marketing strategy.

Better In Brentwood will be advertised in the major tourism magazines including Sunset, Via, and USA Today's Go Escape edition. We are promoting Better In Brentwood on an Internet landing page containing a City-wide Community Events calendar, plus promoting opportunities for recreation, shopping, and dining.

We will also promote Better In Brentwood through a tourism packet we will leave in hotel rooms. We will market a number of promotional products such as an apron with our "Everything tastes Better in Brentwood" tagline. Other promotional merchandise will include such things as t-shirts, wineglasses, water bottles, coffee cups, lanyards, polo shirts, and stickers. The products are available for purchase by residents at Little Miss Everything and Monogramming By Frichy. A City Store for employees is selling the products and we are encouraging them to wear the merchandise. We are encouraging retailers, as well, to place the logo and tagline on their own merchandise. I'm especially excited by the educational component we've included in our Better In Brentwood project. We will be working with representatives from the Youth Commission to provide a set of Better In Brentwood Action Heroes and a comic book series designed to teach basic economics and especially to promote the advantage of shopping locally, such as the sales tax on local products that then remains in the community.

We will also promote Better In Brentwood through a citywide banner program consisting of Military and Veterans (my favorite), Welcome, Events, Sponsorships, and Art. For Art banners local artists will be invited to present their work on banners that will be hung at the City Park and Downtown Brentwood for three months and then auctioned off at a major community event. Our Military and Veterans banners offer a chance to honor our local heroes by being featured on a banner from Memorial Day through Veterans Day. Our Brentwood community may apply and nominate an Active Duty or Veteran member to be displayed.

We're rolling out Better In Brentwood in phases. The merchandise is up and ready to go. The website will launch and be live soon. The Banner program is underway. This is so exciting! We can't wait to see the results of this wonderful program. Shop, Dine, Explore, Live and Play, Better in Brentwood!